

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FEDERAL HORTICULTURAL BOARD
WASHINGTON, D. C.

March 11, 1914.

NEWS LETTER NO. 7.
MAIL IMPORTATIONS OF PLANTS.

BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY
RECEIVED
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Dear Sir:

U. S. Department of Agriculture

For your information on the subject of the restrictions placed upon the importation of plants in the mails from foreign countries, you are advised that an order issued by the Second Assistant Postmaster General December 16, 1913, prohibits the importation from foreign countries through the mails of all plants and plant products for propagation, including seeds, except field, vegetable, and flower seeds. This prohibition, therefore, applies to bulbs, roots, and tubers, and to all seeds of trees, shrubs, or other plants, except only field, vegetable and flower seeds.

Cotton seed, which would be rated as a field seed, is, however, prohibited entry into the United States from any foreign country except certain States in Mexico by Quarantine No. 8, and this prohibition, therefore, naturally extends to mail packages as well as to shipments by other carriers. Domestic Quarantine No. 9 also prohibits the movement of cotton seed from Hawaii to the United States.

Under the order issued by the Second Assistant Postmaster General nursery stock and other plant products for propagation, except as noted, received in the mails from foreign coun-

tries are to be returned from the post office of receipt, as prohibited, to the country and place of origin.

This restricts the carriage of such products from foreign countries to other means, such as by express or freight. Importations by these methods pass through the customs office in the normal way, and are under complete control. Postal sendings are entered under an entirely different system and necessitate examination at any little post office throughout the United States.

It is possible to transmit many injurious insects and plant diseases in lots of plants or seeds sent through the mails, and the inspection of such mail sendings is an impossibility without a vast army of inspectors. It was, further, found necessary to make the restriction very broad, much broader than the original definition of nursery stock, for the reason that foreign shippers, and postmasters as well, were quite unable to make the distinction between nursery stock and herbaceous plants, etc., and the only safe course was to exclude all plants from mail sendings with the exception of the seeds noted, which are deemed to carry comparatively little danger of introducing insect pests or diseases.

This information may be of use to inspectors in the case of any mail shipments being referred to them for examination through error or lack of information on the part of the local postmaster.

Yours very truly,

C. L. MARLATT,

Chairman of Board.